

August 14, 1967

Dr. A. Harry Passow  
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Teachers College  
Columbia University  
New York, New York 10029

Dear Dr. Passow:

Thank you very much for sending me the press release of June 18 on the District of Columbia school study. The issues of educational policy that are unfolding in Washington, d. C. are of course a matter of intense national interest, even to non-professionals, as far as concerns education, like myself.

I wonder if you could tell me where I might find some clarity on the following issue. In the 1962 conference on "Education in Depressed Areas" which you edited, on page 43, Kenneth B. Clark quotes Hansen, apparently approvingly, that "since the desegregation of these schools there has been a measurable improvement in the average academic achievement level of both Negro and white children". I realize that there has been a further lapse of time and progress of aspirations, but that statement appears to be in direct contradiction to the first sentence of your press release. Is there objective evidence that the average academic response of comparable groups of children is better or worse today than it was ten or fifteen years ago in Washington, D. C.? Or is it impossible to control that comparability over such an interval of time? Or is it rather that our reasonable expectations have overreached the facts of social progress?

I realize the pressure and contention that must surround your efforts at the present time and I would hardly want to increase your burdens. I would therefore be content with the briefest of answers or simple references to the sources you would approve. May I, however, ask you one further question of fact: was it possible for the main substance of your study report to be available as evidence for the court's consideration in *Hobson vs. Hansen*? Since Judge Wright's decision will apparently be allowed to stand without appeal as a political decision of the District Board, it would, in my own view, be unfortunate if the widest range of competent evidence were not part of the record.

I would not presume to take any of your informal and otherwise unpublished remarks as available for a quotation unless you indicate otherwise, and in any event not before the September 30 delivery of the study report. After that date, however, I would like to consider putting together a column on the subject, and I would appreciate it very much if you could keep me informed about any statement of your own views that could be made available to me either for background or for attribution.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

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*Are Intell. Tests Fair 6-3-67*  
*Priority of Educ. 3-26-67*

PASSOW, A.H.